

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF
HAMILTON-WENTWORTH

**REGIONAL GOVERNMENT
STRUCTURE**

"A View to the Future"



R. J. (Reg) Whynott
August 1994

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August 26, 1994

TO ALL MEMBERS OF COUNCIL
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH

Dear Councillors:

I am pleased to present to Council the accompanying report on the review of the political structure of our Region as per the direction of Council in October 1993.

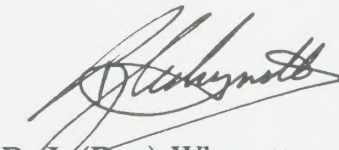
It has not been an easy task to complete in addition to fulfilling the normal day-to-day responsibilities of office. I do believe, however, that it was a worthwhile enterprise and that it will provide much "food for thought" for the present and future councils, and hopefully lead to some positive action in the best interests of the taxpaying citizens we represent.

We have been experiencing difficult economic times and everyone has discovered that all of us, governments included, must be constantly aware of the need for change, the need to be efficient and effective while remaining accountable, the need to be aware of the difficulties our citizens and employees are experiencing, and the need to be responsive and responsible. We must be willing to set aside our personal biases, as I have had to do, in the interests of our people, our community, and our future, and take steps designed to ensure that we leave a positive legacy rather than an unbearable burden for those who will follow.

I wish to express my appreciation to the Councillors who participated in the review and to our Regional Clerk, Mr. Bob Prowse, for his invaluable assistance with this project.


I submit this report for your consideration and, hopefully, for your action.

Yours truly



R. J. (Reg) Whynott

(i)



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REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

"A View to the Future"

INTRODUCTION

Regional Council, at its meeting of October 5, 1993, directed that the Regional Chairman, in consultation with members of Regional Council, and together with the Clerk of the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth, conduct a review of the Regional Political structure and report back to Regional Council with recommendations for consideration.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the political structures employed in select Canadian cities and to discuss how some of these concepts could be applied in the Hamilton-Wentworth area. The first section of the report will provide an historical overview of how and why regional government developed in Ontario. The next section will discuss the political structure of regional governments in Ontario. The third section will discuss the "unicity" governing structure of the City of Winnipeg. The fourth section will discuss how some of the lessons learned from other places can be applied to Hamilton-Wentworth. The fifth section will summarize the results of the consultative interviews conducted with members of Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Council, and the sixth and final section will outline the report's recommendations.

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL GOVERNMENT IN ONTARIO

Regional government was introduced in Ontario in the early 1970s, although the origins of the concept are usually dated from the creation of Metropolitan Toronto in 1954. It is important to understand why regional governments were created to replace the previous county structure. The specific circumstances surrounding the creation of each regional government were a bit different, but the general principles were similar.

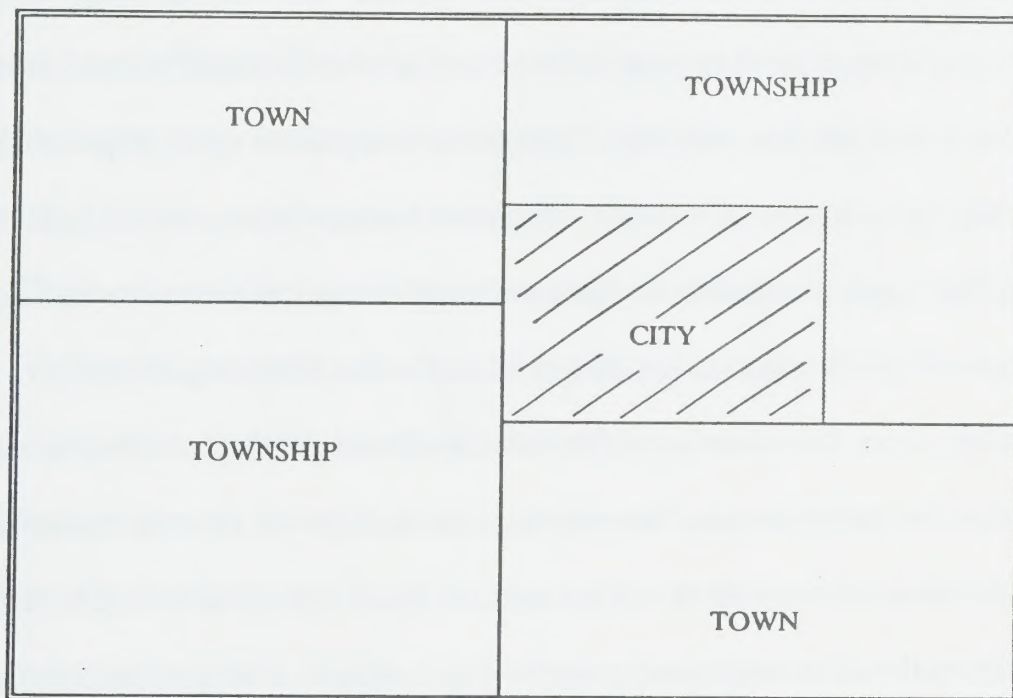
TABLE 1

CREATION OF REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN ONTARIO	
Metropolitan Toronto	1954
Ottawa-Carleton	1969
District of Muskoka	1970
Niagara	1970
York	1970
Sudbury	1972
Waterloo	1972
Durham	1973
Halton	1973
Hamilton-Wentworth	1973
Peel	1973
Haldimand-Norfolk	1974

The County government system was established in 1849 when the Baldwin Act introduced democratic local government to Ontario, and the basic principles employed in the system were not changed between 1847 and the 1970s. One of those basic principles was the separation of urban and rural areas. The concept of separation meant that urban

areas which were located within counties were not a part of the county government structure for administrative or decision-making purposes. This created the somewhat irregular situation depicted in figure 1 in which there was an island of autonomy within the county administrative unit. There were some linkages between the county and the urban areas such as suburban roads commissions, but generally the county and the urban areas within it operated in isolation from one another.

FIGURE 1



A second aspect of county governments is that they generally provided only the fundamental levels of public services. The rural dwellers who were the mainstay of county government were fairly self-sufficient and made few demands on municipal services. County councillors were under considerable pressure to minimize taxes even if this translated into a fairly basic level of services.

This form of government worked (and still works) quite well in rural areas. Farmers lived in the rural areas and had few contacts with the urban areas; urban dwellers had little reason to travel to rural areas. Before the development of modern transportation, there were few direct connections between urban and rural areas, and so they shared few problems. The principle of separation worked well.

These circumstances changed in the post-war period when suburbanization developed and the use of the automobile became more wide-spread. The clear dividing line between the farmers who lived in rural areas and the urbanites who lived and worked in the cities and large towns became less distinct. Suburban developments grew in previously rural areas, the phenomenon of rural, non-farm residences became more common, and members of farm families began to commute to work in the cities to supplement the declining farm income. In short, the boundaries between rural and urban areas began to blur.

In many places, this situation was handled by allowing the urban areas to annex the newly-developed suburban areas. This was less than satisfactory for both the urban areas which assumed the additional lands and the counties which lost valuable assessment. From the standpoint of the cities and towns, growth was occurring in a hodge-podge manner with no consideration of good planning or ease of service delivery. Many counties were seriously affected as major portions of their land area, and the property taxes flowing from them, were absorbed by the urban area.

The concept of metropolitan government was developed in Toronto as a solution to this problem. It ended the separation of urban and rural areas by combining the densely populated City of Toronto and its inner boroughs with the then rural areas of Etobicoke,

North York, and Scarborough. This allowed development to occur in a reasonably planned manner and provided adequate funds to ensure that the necessary infrastructure was in place as development occurred.

This leads to the second manner in which regional government differed from county government. Counties generally supplied only a rudimentary level of services and concentrated on minimizing taxes. Metropolitan Toronto was given responsibility for major services (policing, parks, water purification, sewage treatment) which would require it to operate at a very different financial level from its county predecessors.

Obviously, not everything about Metro unfolded perfectly, but it was generally regarded as a success, and the concept was extended to other urbanizing areas in the early 1970s. These new regional governments were all created on the same two principles as Metro: ending the separation of urban and rural areas, and making the region a much stronger form of government than the county had been.

Many people wax nostalgic about county government and some would like to return to the days of a simpler and cheaper form of government. They conveniently forget that the reason county government was so much cheaper than regional government was that it provided a vastly different level of service. It became clear by the 1960s that county government was not a governing structure which could be used in rapidly urbanizing areas. Ontario chose the vehicle of two tier regional government to replace it. These structures have been generally successful in coping with the rapid growth of the 1970s, but they have continued to change with the times. The next section will discuss the evolution.

2. REGIONAL GOVERNMENT POLITICAL STRUCTURES

When regional governments were first established, their electoral structures were quite similar. They have evolved over time, but there still seems to be a similarity in the direction in which they are evolving.

When regional governments were created, all except one were governed by councils which were entirely indirectly elected. Indirect election meant that members served on regional council by virtue of their election to office in one of the constituent area municipalities. In this system, councillors found themselves elevated to regional council in a variety of ways. The mayors were always members of regional council, but beyond that there were a number of methods of selecting members of regional council. The City of Toronto had two members per ward, and the candidate polling the largest number of votes was the representative on both city and Metro council, while the candidate polling the second largest number was elected to city council only. In boroughs which had boards of control, all the controllers also served on Metro council and some boroughs selected additional metro councillors by vote of the municipal council. In other regions, the area municipal councils voted to send certain of their members to the regional council. The only common denominator was that all regional councillors also served on area municipal councils.

Several problems came to be identified with indirect election. First, it imposed significant time demands on councillors who had two sets of council meetings to attend, two sets of committee meetings to attend, two sets of agendas to read, etc.

Second, it meant none of these councillors owed their first allegiance to the regional government. Many of them worked very hard at regional business, but they were always aware that their re-election depended on their performance on their local council. Others may have been less diligent in their approach to regional business because their motivation for seeking office was based on concern about some local issue, and they found themselves almost accidentally a member of another council. There were even extreme cases where politicians found that the surest route to election in their area municipality was by region-bashing. They then found themselves on the council of the government which they had campaigned against. For a variety of reasons, indirect election began to lose favour with the electorate.

The one region which had a different electoral system from the beginning was Niagara. Here the council was composed of the mayors of the twelve area municipalities who served on council on an indirectly elected basis, and sixteen members¹ who were directly elected to the regional council. Direct election meant that members were elected to serve on regional council and only on regional council. They did not serve on an area municipal council as well. Niagara continues to employ this combination of direct and indirect election, and in spite of quite a bit of controversy over regional government in Niagara, there has never been a serious suggestion of abandoning this method of election. In 1988, Metro Toronto adopted this system of combined direct and indirect election.

¹ One member was added in the 1970s, so that there are now seventeen directly elected members.

Because of the problems identified above, most regional governments have shifted some of their seats from indirect election to double direct. In the double direct method, candidates run for seats which are identified as serving on both the area municipal and regional councils. This situation is preferable to the previous indirect method because candidates decide from the beginning that they are running for this double-duty position and, ideally, electors understand that they are selecting people to represent them on both councils. Table 2 indicates that this method is clearly the most popular method currently in use. At present, with the exception of Ottawa-Carleton which, as a result of legislation approved by the province in May of 1994, will move to direct elections of their councillors this fall, all regional councils retain one aspect of indirect election in that the mayors of the member municipalities serve as members.

It might well be that this double direct method is a stepping stone on the road to directly elected councils. Impetus for this will likely come from several sources. First, many councillors who serve at both levels, particularly the mayors, are concerned about the workload imposed on them. Second, councillors are concerned about their ability to work effectively in two different governments. In Metro and Niagara, where there is a mixture of directly and indirectly elected councillors, the common complaint of the directly elected councillors is that they must carry more of the workload than their split colleagues. Finally, there is a sense that if regional government is ever going to be considered a full-fledged government, it should be governed by councillors whose only allegiance is to the regional level of government and the taxpayers impacted by its policies, not by a group of councillors who frequently find their loyalties torn between two roles - local vs regional.

As mentioned earlier, legislation has been adopted by the provincial government which will make Ottawa-Carleton the first totally directly elected regional council in Ontario. This legislation eliminates mayors from serving on regional council. Instead, the regional councillors will be elected from a ward system established only for regional purposes. The boundaries of these wards will not necessarily follow the boundaries of the area municipalities.

The trend across Ontario seems clear. Indirect election is on the way out. Generally speaking, it has been eliminated for all except mayors and the Ottawa-Carleton proposal has, as previously stated, eliminated them from regional council. Following the Niagara, Metro and Ottawa-Carleton examples, it seems likely that direct election will become the procedure of choice. Niagara has had direct election from the beginning; Metro Toronto adopted it in 1988; and Ottawa-Carleton will have it in 1994. The trend is definitely toward regional councils composed solely of directly elected members.

The major argument in favour of the continuation of indirectly elected or double directly elected members is that this arrangement facilitates coordination between the region and the area municipalities, and, on the surface at least, attempts to preserve local identities. There are a couple of problems with this argument. The first is that the people who are supposed to be doing the coordinating are frequently the first to suggest, and rightfully so, that time constraints pose serious limitations on their abilities to actually accomplish this. For example, mayors must frequently ration the amount of time dedicated to regional business because of the heavy demand made upon them by virtue of their municipal duties.

Second, regional electors should be entitled to elect a regional councillor who will represent his/her regional interests only. As it currently exists in Hamilton-Wentworth, councillors who are indirectly or double directly elected must try to approach regional issues from a purely regional perspective. However, when faced with the reality that they have been elected to council by voters in their local municipality or ward, it is difficult if not impossible to consider regional issues without a "local" bias.

A second aspect of the structure of regional council is the method of selection of the regional chair. In each region, the chair for the first term of office was selected by the provincial government. In subsequent terms, the regional councils selected their chairs by a vote of council. They could select anyone who was a qualified elector in the region. The person selected was not required to be an elected councillor, although in practice most councils tend to select people who are currently or had recently been elected councillors. This is still the situation in most regions, although two other methods of selection are employed. Metro Toronto council must select its chair from among its members, although the person selected cannot be a mayor. In Hamilton-Wentworth and Ottawa-Carleton, the regional chair is selected by general vote of the electorate at the municipal election. It is fairly difficult to discern a clear trend from this.

TABLE 2

ELECTORAL SYSTEMS OF REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN ONTARIO

REGION	POPULATION	NUMBER OF AREA MUNICIPALITIES	NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS	METHOD OF ELECTION
Hamilton-Wentworth	451,684	6	28	6 mayors plus all 16 members of the City of Hamilton council plus 1 additional representative from each other municipality elected on a double direct basis plus the chair
Metropolitan Toronto	2,151,430	6	34	6 mayors plus 28 directly elected councillors; chair chosen from the 28 directly elected councillors
Durham	390,407	8	33	8 mayors plus 24 councillors elected on a double direct basis plus the chair
Haldimand-Norfolk	93,933	6	20	6 mayors plus 13 councillors elected on a double direct basis plus the chair
Halton	300,612	4	25	4 mayors plus 20 councillors elected on a double direct basis plus the chair
Muskoka	43,049	6	23	6 mayors plus 16 councillors elected on a double direct basis plus the chair
Niagara	385,396	12	30	12 mayors plus 17 councillors directly elected in the area municipalities plus the chair
Ottawa-Carleton (existing situation)	663,898	11	33	11 mayors plus 21 councillors elected on a double direct basis plus the chair
Ottawa-Carleton (as of Dec 1/94)	663,898	11	19	18 members elected on the basis of a regional ward system which would not necessarily have boundaries respecting the area municipality boundaries plus the chair
Peel	685,523	3	22	3 mayors plus 10 members of City of Mississauga council plus 8 councillors elected on a double direct basis plus the chair
Sudbury	156,370	7	21	7 mayors plus 13 members elected on double direct basis plus the chair
Waterloo	370,330	7	26	7 mayors plus 8 councillors from the City of Kitchener selected by vote of city council plus 10 councillors from other municipalities elected on a double direct basis plus the chair
York	476,595	9	20	9 mayors plus 10 councillors elected on a double direct basis plus the chair

3. WINNIPEG "UNICITY" STRUCTURE

While Ontario was opting for a two-tier system, most of the western provinces favoured one-tier systems. The City of Winnipeg has been chosen for discussion here because it bears similarities to the Hamilton-Wentworth situation in that there was one large central city surrounded by several smaller, but quite significant suburban municipalities. While these were separate entities politically and administratively, residents tended to see the area as a unified whole for purposes of shopping, recreation and most other activities. In 1960 Manitoba created a two tier regional government in the greater Winnipeg area. The Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg was the upper tier government which combined the City of Winnipeg and eleven suburban municipalities. Almost from the beginning, there were problems with this arrangement, not unlike those experienced in Hamilton-Wentworth. There were serious tensions between and among the various municipalities. Some of these were based on different perspectives on such issues as economic development; others were based simply on personal disputes. Another problem was that the two-tier system was difficult for citizens to understand. There was confusion about which level of government was responsible for which services. As expressed in a 1970 "White Paper" on local government reform for Winnipeg:

"Many Citizens in Greater Winnipeg, faced with the complexities and confused authority of a two-tier system of local government, now find themselves unable to focus clearly on the responsible authority. The citizen often knows neither whom to blame for a given situation, to whom to turn for remedy, nor to

whom to tender advice if he feels he has a worthwhile idea to offer. The inevitable result is that the citizen begins to feel frustrated, alienated, and hence withdraws from active participation in the community. He is unable, in short, to exercise his full rights of democratic involvement in the level of government theoretically most responsive to his wishes."

By the early 1970s, the level of dissatisfaction was sufficiently high to prompt the provincial government to call for change. The decision was to move to the concept of one large city.

The concept implemented in 1972 is commonly called "unicity." It involved the creation of one large city amalgamating the City of Winnipeg and its surrounding municipalities. However, there was a feeling that community interests were so important that they needed to be preserved. The method of preserving those community interests was the establishment of community committees. The full city council consisted of fifty councillors, but these were broken down into community committees of three to six councillors. These community committees were to have responsibility for the delivery of certain services within their areas. They were also to function as two-way communication devices between the relatively distant city hall and the local citizens. The role of the community committees was to be complemented by residents advisory groups, formed by local residents to provide advice to their councillors to take to city hall.

The full proposal was never implemented and the planned combination of centralization of some services with significant community input was never achieved. However, the moral of the Winnipeg story is that there are mechanisms which can provide

for a balance between centralization and decentralization within the same organizational structure. The Winnipeg situation did not unfold exactly as planned, but that does not mean that it is impossible to attain some kind of balance between centralization and community interest.

4. APPLICATIONS TO HAMILTON-WENTWORTH

The previous discussions suggest two possible ways in which the existing governing structure of Hamilton-Wentworth could be changed. The first is an incremental adjustment based on the existing regional government structure. The second is a more direct proposal based on the Winnipeg example.

i) Incremental Adjustment to Existing Regional Government Structure

The current council of the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth is composed of some members elected on an indirect basis and some on a double direct basis. The six mayors are indirectly elected to serve on regional council. The five additional representatives from the suburban municipalities are all selected on a double direct basis. The position of the councillors from the City of Hamilton is a bit difficult to categorize. They could be regarded as double direct in that voters in the City of Hamilton should understand that when they elect members to the City of Hamilton council they are also sending them to the regional council. However, realistically city issues generally dominate during the election campaign so that it might be more appropriate to regard City of Hamilton aldermen as being indirectly elected to the regional council.

The point was made earlier that direct election of councillors is becoming the trend. If the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth chose to follow this trend it could:

- provide for the continuation of the direct election of the Regional Chair
- provide for nine directly elected regional councillors from the City of Hamilton;

- provide for two directly elected regional councillors from Stoney Creek, Ancaster, Dundas and Flamborough;
- provide for one directly elected regional councillor from Glanbrook
- provide for a review of the current ward boundaries in each municipality within the Region
- provide for the establishment of a citizen committee to examine the question of compensation, support staff and accommodations for the councillors.

Table 3 illustrates the distribution of council seats which would result from these possibilities. This would provide for a council of nineteen members including the chair. Currently the suburban municipalities each have two representatives and the City of Hamilton has seventeen. This alternative would modify this proportional representation and would reduce the size of regional council by 32%.

Table 3

PROPOSED DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTED REGIONAL COUNCIL SEATS

MUNICIPALITY	NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS	POPULATION	GEOGRAPHIC AREA km²
Ancaster	2	22,053	68.8
Dundas	2	21,789	10.3
Flamborough	2	29,290	186.9
Glanbrook	1	9,801	78.6
Hamilton	9	318,947	54.4
Stoney Creek	2	49,804	39.7
TOTAL *	19	451,684	438.7

*** (Total of 19 includes 18 councillors and the Chair)**

These recommendations constitute an improvement over the status quo for a couple of reasons. First, they would convert the regional council to an entirely directly elected body, (ie., all members of regional council would have their first allegiance to the business of regional council). Second, these recommendations would significantly reduce the size of council while maintaining or improving the existing balance of representation.

ii) The Winnipeg Experience

The Winnipeg example indicates that centralization in a single tier does not have to destroy meaningful involvement at the community level. If the Hamilton-Wentworth area chose to follow the Winnipeg example it could create a single tier government covering the entire area. It could also consider involving community committees having responsibility for making recommendations to the Standing Committees of Regional Council respecting the delivery of services at the local community level. The council could be composed of councillors elected by wards. These councillors would form the governing body of the region, but they would also work with the community committees thereby recreating a "town hall meeting" concept, which could generate recommendations about issues relating specifically to the local communities.

The "community committees" could be organized around the previous municipalities or parts of them, or they could even cross the previous boundaries if that makes more sense. Local residents would probably be able to maintain a closer relationship with these community committees than they could with the previous area municipal government structures.

There would be a number of alternative ways of organizing the details of a system based on the unicity Winnipeg model and a task force could be struck to so investigate. The important point to draw from the Winnipeg model is that it is possible to design a structure which balances centralization of certain services with meaningful community inputs.

There are currently a total of 86 political positions within the region, not counting MPs, MPPs, and members of the three Boards of Education, (see Table 4), therefore moving to this form of single tier government would result in a significant reduction not only in the total number of political positions, but also in political salary expenditure which, under the present system totals in excess of \$1.4 million annually.

In addition to the political consideration, this would also bring about administrative savings due to the fact that it would no longer be necessary to maintain the seven bureaucratic support structures heretofore provided by the municipalities within the region and paid for by the local taxpayers.

TABLE 4
POLITICAL POSITIONS
WITHIN HAMILTON-WENTWORTH REGION

MUNICIPALITY	POSITION
Hamilton	17 (includes mayor)
Ancaster	7 (includes mayor and deputy mayor)
Dundas	9 (includes mayor and deputy mayor)
Flamborough	9 (includes deputy mayor and mayor)
Glanbrook	7 (includes mayor and deputy mayor)
Stoney Creek	9 (includes deputy mayor and mayor)
RMHW	28 (includes chairman)
TOTAL	86

5. INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS OF REGIONAL COUNCIL

Instruction for the review process included the provision of an opportunity for participation by current members of regional council. A memorandum was circulated to council advising of the desire to carry out interviews with those wishing to do so. Seventeen members of regional council did participate in the interview process.

The following examples of the diversity of opinion that revealed itself during the interview process may give some insight as to how far from unanimity our council remains after 20 years, even on the most basic of questions regarding regional government:

- "there are too many elected representatives - we are over-governed"
- "I don 't think we have too many elected representatives, but I think we pay too much"
- "I think the present system works just fine - give it a little more time to fine-tune itself"
- "the present system just simply doesn't work - there is far too much parochialism and mistrust"
- "regional staff are not as responsive to the elected people as municipal staff are"
- "I find regional staff to be very co-operative - I've never had a problem getting the information I needed from regional staff"
- "wearing two hats (municipal/regional) can be difficult at times - my allegiance is to those who elect me"

- "I have no trouble wearing two hats - it's not difficult to distinguish between local and regional issues, although I think it is difficult for the public"

The foregoing examples notwithstanding, the interview process did reveal the following points on which a majority of the interviewees seemed to agree:

- i) it was the general feeling of those interviewed that there were indeed too many elected positions within Hamilton-Wentworth, and that the numbers should be reduced. Comments made by some of the members were that they had received feed-back from citizens in their communities who felt they were over-governed.
- ii) a common theme expressed by several of the interviewees was that it was difficult to represent two councils or "wear two hats" because there was no doubt in their minds that they owed their allegiance to the people who voted for them within their municipalities or their wards.
- iii) a majority of the councillors interviewed agreed (some with enthusiasm, some with resignation) that a one-tier system of government in Hamilton-Wentworth was inevitable. They did stress however that it would be important to preserve the local identities through representation by population and/or by geographic area and that this could be done through a revision of the ward system throughout the region.
- iv) there was general agreement among the councillors interviewed that there was a lot of parochialism when dealing with regional issues and that the only way

to avoid this would be to have the candidates run in a direct election to regional council.

- v) a recurring theme among the interviewees was the call for one region-wide assessment base especially if a move was made to go to a one-tier regional government
- vi) much concern was expressed by the councillors interviewed regarding the reduced visibility of a police presence in the community as well as the poor response time to calls for police assistance.
- vii) there appeared to be a strong sense that due to the decentralized nature of the regional departments, regional staff did not appear to be as accountable to the elected representatives as were the staffs of the municipalities. It was felt that a more centralized structure might remedy this situation.
- viii) lack of trust was an issue commented on throughout the interviews, especially between the councillors of the City of Hamilton, and the area municipal councillors although there were a few of those interviewed who seemed to feel that relations had improved over the last 20 years.
- ix) there was general agreement among those interviewed that more should be done to investigate and pursue the viability of privatization and partnerships of regional services.

The following points represent the views expressed by a significant minority of those councillors interviewed:

- i) there was some agreement that one alderman per ward (City of Hamilton) would be sufficient to represent the ward. It was felt that with the present system of two aldermen per ward, there were opportunities for one alderman to compete with the other alderman of the ward to garner favour with groups within the ward, rather than work co-operatively towards a common goal.
- ii) members of council who felt that a one-tier system would threaten local autonomy called for the creation of citizen advisory groups, or something of that nature in order to ensure that the concerns of the local community would be represented
- iii) while discussing the likelihood of a move to one-tier government, a number of the councillors expressed the concept in one form or another of transforming the existing municipal buildings of each municipality into local centres of government which would provide routine regional, provincial and federal government services thereby affording the local residents one-stop shopping as an alternative to coming to downtown Hamilton to do their governmental business.
- iv) a number of councillors interviewed expressed the need for a regional headquarters facility that was more centralized and more identifiable for the public.
- v) members of council expressed the need for staff to be more accessible and for communications between regional staff and the elected representatives to be improved.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

During the preparations of this report and from the comments from some of the interviewees, it became obvious that there is a feeling among some of the councillors and the taxpaying public, that Hamilton-Wentworth has "too much government". In particular, the fact that there are 86 paid municipal/regional political seats responsible for providing services to the 451,684 citizens in the Hamilton-Wentworth Region, does not sit well with many. Taxes, at all levels have become, or are becoming, a burden which people simply cannot continue to bear, and the elected representatives must take appropriate steps to bring these taxes under control (or to reduce them) while at the same time ensuring that mechanisms are in place to maintain a satisfactory level of service to the public.

Much has been, and will continue to be done, to reduce municipal costs through initiatives such as downsizing, performance excellence programmes, development of partnerships with outside parties, buying or selling of services from municipality to municipality or from region to region, etc. However, the time has come for a major step to be taken. Duplication of services can only be totally remedied by a change in the current duplication of government structures.

The questions have to be:

1. "Can we, in a Region of this size, afford the luxury of financing 7 political structures, along with the associated 7 staff support structures necessary to maintain them?"
2. "Can we return to the structures which we have had in place prior to the introduction of regional government in 1973?"

3. "What is the best direction for us to take in order to provide the required services to the taxpaying citizens of this region at a reasonable/realistic tax rate while ensuring our future as a vibrant municipality in which industry and commerce will invest and prosper, side by side with people who will choose to live, work, and play within our region."

In response to questions 1 and 2, the answer must be a resounding no. A way must be found to control costs, particularly with the prospect of more and more responsibility being "downloaded" to the region by the senior levels of government in Canada. Returning to the county system which was in place prior to the introduction of Regional Government in 1973, is neither a viable nor a practical alternative because the cost of dismantling and reassembling the infrastructures already in place would be prohibitive.

With respect to question 3, "what is the best direction for us to take...", the most appropriate response given might be in the form of the following recommendations which are hereby submitted for council's consideration:

1. **That a task force be struck to design a restructured one-tier regional government based on the "Winnipeg Model" with appropriate variations to make it adaptable to Hamilton-Wentworth's local needs, and that the guidelines to be considered by the task force include:**

- a directly elected council composed of 19 members including the chair, 1 member from Glanbrook, 2 members from each of Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough and Stoney Creek, and 9 members from Hamilton
- a blueprint of how regularly scheduled "Town Hall Meetings" would be held in each municipality (or areas within each municipality in the case of the larger communities) at which recommendations would be developed for presentation to standing committees of regional council on issues directly affecting the local municipality
- an opportunity, at least quarterly, for presentations to be made directly to regional council by delegations from the community on issues of the day or ideas for council action in the best interests of the community

- the appropriate legislation to establish a revised ward system throughout the region for regional purposes only
2. That membership on the task force be composed of four (4) members of regional council and four (4) citizen members who would be selected by council from among applications received by the Regional Clerk in response to advertisements placed in the local daily newspaper.
 3. That a resolution of Council be provided to the Province of Ontario requesting the appropriate enabling legislation to allow for changes to the political structure of the Hamilton-Wentworth Region proposed by the task force, to come into effect in concert with the 1997 municipal elections.
 4. That a council resolution be forwarded to the Boards of Education operating within the Hamilton-Wentworth Region, encouraging these Boards to jointly consider a review of their respective operations with a view to consolidating or restructuring their operations on a similar basis as the region.

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LIST OF COUNCILLORS INTERVIEWED

Councillor John Prentice - Dundas

Councillor Tom Jackson - Hamilton

Councillor Geraldine Copps - Hamilton

Councillor Dave Wilson - Hamilton

Mayor Robert Wade - Ancaster

Councillor Grant Shaw - Stoney Creek

Councillor Terry Cooke - Hamilton

Councillor Fred Eisenberger - Hamilton

Mayor Robert Hodgson - Stoney Creek

Councillor Frank D'Amico - Hamilton

Mayor Don Granger - Flamborough

Councillor Ann Sloat - Ancaster

Councillor Frank MacIntyre - Glanbrook

Councillor Robert Charters - Hamilton

Mayor John Addison - Dundas

Mayor Glen Etherington - Glanbrook

Councillor Don Drury - Hamilton

